

Quarterly Roundtable with Virginia's Tribes

June 24, 2020, at 9:00 am

Virtual Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Reggie Tuppance, Jr – Upper Mattaponi
Connie Lovelace – Upper Mattaponi
Martha Adkins – Chickahominy
Lindsey Johnson – Chickahominy
Yvonne Epps-Giddings – Nottoway
Chief Sam Bass – Nansemond
Doris Austin – Eastern Chickahominy
Minnie Lightner – Patawomeck
Letha Moore-Jones, State Independent Living Coordinator & Youth Services Supervisor, DFS
Deborah Eves, Federal Liaison, DFS
Garrett Jones, Resource Family Program Manager, DFS
Brenda Sampe, Project Manager, DFS
Ben Mauro, CQI Project Manager, DFS
Em Parente, Assistant Director, DFS
Jeff Williams, Project Manager, DFS
Jewel Wynn, Tribal Liaison, DFS
Kristin Zagar, Division Director, DFS
Kimberly Murphy, Child Welfare Program Specialist, Children's Bureau

Attendees introduced themselves.

Em: Welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. She shared that we want to facilitate having meetings that work with our partners' schedules. Em emphasized that we want to know how to be more helpful.

Deborah: Shared that we just submitted our CFSP. She shared links to two reports. We will send out the website links so that the callers will have the information. We hope to get more input from our partners.

Brenda: Invited participants to unmute to talk and ask questions. Shared data and confirmed our commitment to review outcomes. We have approximately 5000 in foster care and of those 4 are identified as Native American. We do not have any foster families who are identified as Native American. Reiterated the requirements of local departments to ask the families with whom they work if they are members of any Native American/Indian Tribes.

Letha: Shared about services for older children in foster care and those who age out of foster care. She gave an overview of the Chafee/Independent Living Program (IL) and the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV). Services are individualized and based on needs to prepare and support youth as they transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Garrett: Reiterated that all children need a family. We are moving forward focusing on “kin first”. He discussed “fictive kin” and the screening process for families, foster parents, and fictive-kin. There is a one-page document outlining the foster parent approval process as well as a Kinship Brochure that will be shared after the meeting.

Chief Bass: Asked, Does age come into the decision of the foster care parent? Garrett: No. The local department has the responsibility to determine eligibility. Yvonne: Asked, Is there a minimum age for a foster parent? Garrett: Yes. Em: There is no automatic disapproval for a physical disability, etc. Placements are looked at on a case by case basis. Local Departments must determine if a family has the ability and resources needed to support a child placed with them. Yvonne: Can tribal leaders share with their members the information shared by VDSS. Garrett: Absolutely.

Brenda: We will share information from these meetings and the information Garrett created about the approval process and Kinship Care. She shared the social service system structure in Virginia and talked about improving communication with our tribal partners. She emphasized our desire to be in constant contact and communication. The quarterly roundtable meetings are one way to share information and Jewel and Brenda are available at any time for questions/input.

Em: Want to make sure we have time to ask about your experience with COVID-19. We have been busy transforming our practices over the last several months. We know families are stressed. Is there anything we can do to help connect you to resources or assistance?

Yvonne: Currently working on site now working with the Navajo Nation; 6000 infected and 400 deaths, put them at number one for impact. There are communities without adequate drinking water. The Nation has received health care help. This tribe has been highlighted on the news so it has probably received more help than some of the smaller tribes. Yvonne can share information on how tribes can get help.

Reggie: We have not be directly impacted by sickness, but it has showed our lack of preparedness for emergencies. We spent a lot of time working on being able to contact our citizens. Many don’t have internet access in King and Queen and that has been difficult to navigate.

Doris: We have had problems getting in touch with citizens, too. It’s challenging to keep up with getting updated contact information.

Kristin: Appreciate hearing the conversation; happy that our communication has gotten better now. Been in the Director position for about six weeks; Carl (previous Director) is now with Casey Family Programs. I am excited to see the work we are doing together and what we will do together in the future. Please let us know of any additional needs. This partnership is a priority to us.

Brenda: Our next meeting is in Oct. What type of meeting would you like to have, virtual or in-person?

Doris: I am comfortable with virtual.

Yvonne: I don’t have a preference. I sent you (Brenda) the link to the prayer meeting. The prayers are for the nation and all the Native American Nations.

Brenda: Does anyone have any updates to share from their tribes? We had discussed smaller site visits to get to know you better and learn the differences between the tribes. When it is safe, we will reinstate this process.

Kimberly: Wanted to share the HHS Consultation meeting will be July 28th from 1-5pm via WebEx. Still taking input into the agenda. Yvonne: Is that meeting only for Federal Recognized tribes? There are 4 state recognized tribes in Virginia. Kimberly: I will check on this and get back to you.

Close out meeting with Plus/Delta ("Plus" means, What worked well for this meeting, and "Delta" means, What should we consider for the next meeting?). From the group - Plus: The meeting happened. Liked hearing about data. Liked that there were a number of different departments involved and knowing who to reach out to. Delta: None shared.

Jewel: I would like to thank everyone. Brenda will get out the information and next meeting invitation. Please contact us by telephone or email if you need anything.

LINKS TO WEBSITES REFERENCED IN THE MEETING:

1. Child and Family Services 5-year Plan: https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cfs_plan.cgi
2. ICWA and Tribal Partnerships: <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/icwa/index.cgi>
3. Daily Virtual Devotions and Dialogue around Racial Prejudice: <https://worldembracing.net/>